

DATE: ...27 November 2021.....

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### ***Andrew Michael Crouch – installation address***

Respected Vice Chancellor Judge Steven Majiedt, Sol Plaatje University congregation, colleagues, family and friends, greetings and salutations from my house to yours, as a former student, employee, colleague and friend to Andrew Crouch.

By the time I graduated from University of Cape Town with a BSc majoring in Ocean and Atmospheric Science in 1990, I had learnt a few valuable lessons in my young life (1) as a middle class descendant working to earn a living was a concurrent and obligatory part of studying and (2) as a recent graduate facing the challenges of my time, my options for postgraduate engagement in my chosen field of study, became analogous to solving a quadratic equation, by finding values for  $x$  which are positive integers only.

Hat in hand, I returned to my family after graduating. My father a skilled artisan himself, recommended technical training options as a practical solution to my dilemma. This brought me to Peninsula Technikon where I enrolled for the national diploma in Analytical Chemistry and my professional journey with Prof Andrew Michael Crouch began.



As it turned out I had already known of him from my high school days, but the pieces of that puzzle fell into place, retrospectively. Lynette Crouch, was my former high school music teacher at Bellville South Senior Secondary and to us as young girls, Andrew was introduced as her mysterious fiancé who was studying in America. Of course we totally mixed him up with Andre Crouch the renowned gospel singer. Miss Opperman as we knew her then, was by far one of our favorite teachers and with this mysterious beau in her closet, she came very close to being a high school celebrity in our books.

So, I started my in-service training as a research assistant to Andrew Crouch. Under his mentorship I grew from assistant, to research manager, made the transition to BSc majoring in Chemistry, followed by fulltime Honours study and graduating with a Masters degree in Chemistry from University of the Western Cape. During all this time I continued to work with Andrew observing and learning his unique brand of diplomacy, his capacity building leadership style, his commitment to investing in people, his patience with people, his strategic approach to capacity building in research and research infrastructure and his fervent pursuit of national and international research collaboration. He challenged us to see the bigger picture to “*think bigger by thinking smaller*”.



A typical conversation between Andrew his students would start with a blank piece of paper and pen, followed by a detailed unpacking of the fundamental principles of Chemistry, linking it up to the bigger objective at hand and concluding with a strategic plan, a budget and a philosophical grand finale. For in this approach to problem solving, were embedded responsibility, accountability, ownership and successful resolution. As postgraduate students we knew better than to ask Andrew for money, make excuses for late deliverables etc., because out would come the blank paper and pen and you would leave his office hours later feeling properly schooled, so I learnt in time to come to a meeting prepared with a statement of progress (... no matter how brief) then whip out a paper and pen of my own and challenge the master to a duel.

Over the years Andrew's steadfast character, humble disposition, his love for his wife and family, unpretentious personality and commitment to professionalism has endeared him to his colleagues and friends alike. Whether he held office as professor, head of department, director of research, dean of the faculty, deputy Vice Chancellor or Vice Chancellor, he also remained, the all-round nice guy to all.

In July of 2018 we had the opportunity to host an honorary symposium, under the umbrella of the Electrochemistry chapter of the South African Chemical Institute, in recognition of his academic achievements, his leadership legacy and patriotic capacity building efforts, which coincided with the celebration of 60th birthday. His prolific professional career spanning Concordia



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University, Montreal, Canada, University of the Western Cape , Peninsula Technikon , University of Stellenbosch and WITS had produced second and third generation MSc and PhD graduates who are today productive in South Africa and internationally. What a privilege to have celebrated with him in this way and to honour the legend that is Professor Andrew Crouch.

Finally, Andrew, I bring congratulations and best wishes from my academic home, the Chemistry department at University of the Western Cape, Prof Iwuoha and all the colleagues and students from our research platform SensorLab, colleagues from CY Cergy University in Paris, France all your former students as well as friends and family from Bellville South and Kuils River. Our very best wishes to you and your family for a profitable innings and sustained good health, on this occasion of your installation as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chancellor here at Sol Plaatje University, Kimberley, South Africa.